

THE COMPLETE BARNEY THOMSON NOVELS

THE BARBERSHOP

DOUGLAS
SEVEN
LINDSAY

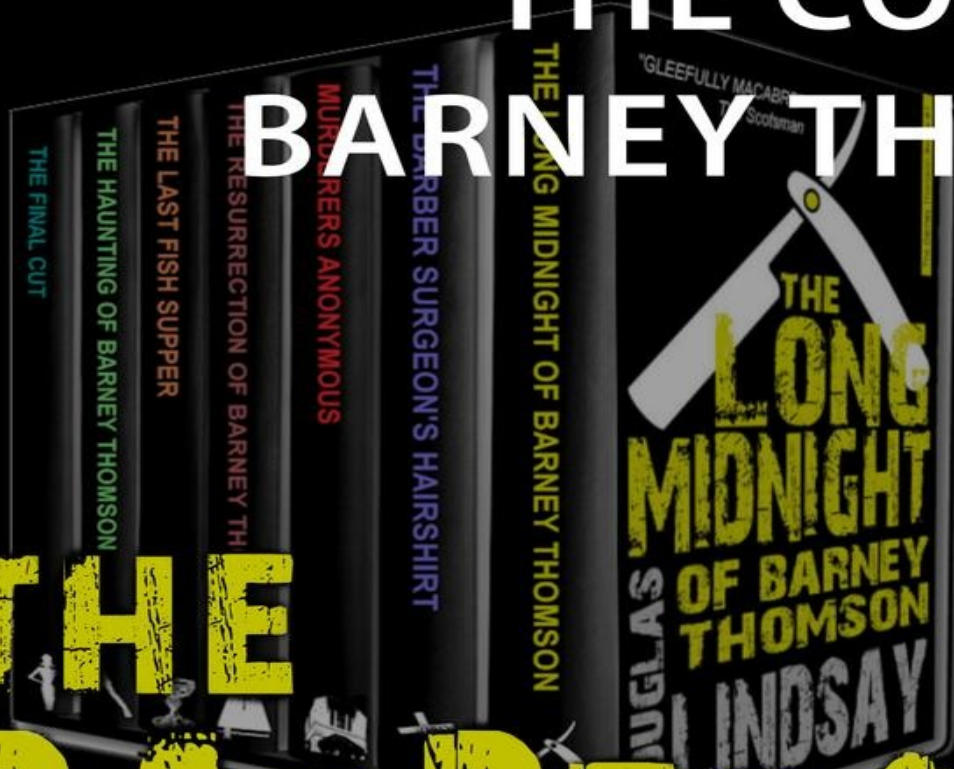


Table Of Contents

[The Barbershop Seven](#)

[The Long Midnight of Barney Thomson](#)

[The Barber Surgeon's Hairshirt](#)

[Murderers Anonymous](#)

[The Resurrection Of Barney Thomson](#)

[The Last Fish Supper](#)

[The Haunting of Barney Thomson](#)

[The Final Cut](#)

[Your FREE copy of The Wormwood Code](#)

[Also by Douglas Lindsay](#)

[About Blasted Heath](#)

The Barbershop Seven

The Complete Barney Thomson Novels
by
Douglas Lindsay

*

Published by Blasted Heath, 2013
copyright 1999-2013 Douglas Lindsay

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission of the author.

Douglas Lindsay has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as the author of this work.

All the characters in this book are fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Cover design by Blasted Heath

Visit Douglas Lindsay at:

www.blastedheath.com

ISBN (ePub): 978-1-908688-41-5

Version 3-2-4

The Long Midnight of Barney Thomson

Published by Blasted Heath, 2011
copyright 1999, 2011 Douglas Lindsay
First published by Piatkus, 1999

For Kathryn

Prologue

Breasts.

The body of the young woman lay on the kitchen table. The face, azurean white in the melanchol repose of death; the eyes, open and stark, staring blankly into whatever world of demons she had ventured; the body, lying to attention, as if on parade; and then the breasts. Small, firm, strangely upstanding in the fluorescent light of the kitchen.

What would happen if they were removed, now that the girl had been dead for over three hours? Would they fold into some amorphous mass, losing their singular beauty, or would they remain firm and shapely, their allure and elegance preserved?

The killer looked over the rest of the body. Until now the victims had all been men. In death their bodies were always brutal and ugly, repugnant flesh on the cusp of decay. But this girl, with her smooth, ghostly complexion, the neat, silvicultural thatch of thin blonde hair nestling snugly between her thighs, and her beautiful breasts, was so much more. It would almost be a shame to cleave into this luxurious pale skin.

Perhaps it would be simpler to send off an ear or a hand. A bland statement of release to the departed's family. A pleasant reminder of their daughter. Something for them to cherish in future years.

A delightful surprise, this girl, when a man had been expected. Hugo, she had said her name was. A final, pointless, damning lie. And the poor girl had been so disappointing in death. It was always the most sumptuous part of it, that horrified look on the face as they watched the cut-throat razor descend with elegant panache to the proffered neck. But this one. This girl. She had hardly looked interested.

Drugs probably. That would be it. So high on drugs that she'd hardly noticed. That was the trouble with people – the great bane of these times – there were just no standards any more.

It was time. And it had to be the breasts. It was so much more artistic. The killer smiled, ever the slave to the aesthetic, and, firmly clutching the right breast, pierced the skin with the eight-inch butcher's knife.

The English Are Bastards

There's nowhere worse than Glasgow on a freezing cold, dank, sodden day in March, especially when your car is in the garage undergoing repairs costing twice NASA's annual budget, and you are obliged to spend your day cutting hair. Greasy hair; pungent hair; hair riddled with insects; hair which cries out to be fashioned into a work of art, when the customer won't allow; hair which requires the use of chainsaw, an implement long ago outlawed in barber shops. Hair of all sorts, vile, messy, contemptible.

Barney Thomson, barber, scowled. They were all bastards, every one of them that came into the shop. And if, on occasion, some left feeling like their head had just been raped, then they deserved it.

As he stood at the kerb waiting to cross the road for the final struggle up the hill, a passing van hugging the pavement, sent a panoramic rainbow of water over his trousers and jacket; and he had no time to move before the rear wheels kicked up that little extra which propelled some more into his face.

He watched it speed off, thought of raising his fist, but sodden apathy got the better of him. There was no point. He hunched his shoulders even further and trudged across the road, imagining the van driver having a heart attack, dying at the wheel.

Sure, it rained everywhere in Scotland, he thought, one foot plodding in front of the other, it was one of the things that defined it as a place. But there was no other city as dour as Glasgow in the rain. Edinburgh – the rain made the castle even more dramatic. Same for Stirling. Perth, a land of kings, glorious in all weather. Dundee, Aberdeen, they were on the east coast, so if it wasn't raining then they wouldn't look natural.

It was just Glasgow. In the sun it looked good, and in the rain it was terrible. An awful place to be.

He was thinking that perhaps it was time to leave. Agnes didn't want to go, but then, he didn't want to take her with him. He could open up his own shop in one of the small towns up north. Fort William, Oban, Ullapool, wherever. Just away from here, and all these bloody miserable people. Like himself, the most miserable of the lot.

Two youngsters, duffel coated against the rain, school bags plastered onto their backs, gallons of molten snot turning their faces into cruel parodies of the Reichenbach Falls, scuttled past him on the way to some pre-school turpitude, and he thought of children. The barber's nightmare. He hated the look of them, with their mothers looking at every snip of the hair, and talking all the time telling you what to do. And the kids kicking their feet up and down, making noises, incapable of keeping still. You spend twenty minutes just dying to give them a clip round the ear. But your hands were tied. Mothers should have to cut the hair of their own children until they were eighteen, he thought, and the only real smile of the day came to his lips.

He was nearly there, the long trudge almost over. He imagined himself to have been on a long trek across the Arctic. In euphonious celebration of his achievement, the rain increased its intensity so that it bounced off the pavement. He hurried the last hundred yards to the shop, but it was to no avail, and by the time he arrived his jacket had given up the ghost, his clothes were sticking to his skin like a over-reliant child, and his carefully nurtured bouffant hair had plummeted into a watery abyss. Neither of the others had yet arrived, and so he had to stand for another minute in the rain, fumbling to get the keys from his pocket before he could escape the downpour.

In the grey of early morning the shop was cold and lonely, and his heart sank further at the thought of the day ahead. He should have become an astronaut when he'd had the chance.

The television muttered in the corner. Wullie Henderson looked up from the Daily Record to watch the action. Aston Villa versus Derby County. Dire stuff, but football was football, and he'd reached the end of the sports pages.

They were filled with the usual things. Football, football, football, and an enlarged section on the England cricket team's latest test defeat. The size of the report was always directly proportional to the size of the defeat, he reflected, as the ball flew into the net from twenty-five yards, sparking a minor but nevertheless engaging, pitch invasion.

He looked back and re-read the article on whether Rangers were about to sign Alessandro del Piero for £30 million, in an effort to still be participating in the Champions League come September, then folded the paper and laid it on the table. Took a cursory glance at the front page headline. 'The English Are Bastards'. Par for the course, he thought, as he tucked into his final piece of toast and marmalade. Beneath that story was a follow-up report concerning the latest murder in the city. The most recent in a series of grotesque killings, the work of one man, or so the police believed, which had been dominating the news for a couple of months. The English must really be bastards to keep that off the headline.

'You'll be late. It's nearly five to,' said his wife, not bothering to raise her eyes from the Daily Express.

Wullie Henderson looked at the television. They'd moved onto women's golf, two words that just ought not to be used in the same sentence. Time to go. Looked at his wife. Thought of the girl he'd met on Friday night in the Montrose, and wondered if she'd be there again this Friday. It didn't do any harm to fantasise, though he knew that he'd do more than that if he got the chance.

'Aye, I suppose you're right.'

He stood up, pulled at his jeans, was satisfied that he was beginning to lose some weight, then turned to the back door.

'Here you! You put a jacket on or you'll catch your death out there, so you will. It's pure bucketing down, so it is.'

'I've got one in the motor, and I'll be parking right outside the shop anyway. Keep your knicker on.'

'Aye, well, away you go,' she said to his back, and with a final grunt thrown over his shoulder, he was gone. Moira Henderson looked up from the paper to see the door close, and wondered whether to have another piece of toast.

The rain was hammering down as he stepped out of the door, and he ran to his car. A month earlier he would've been expecting trouble getting it started, but now, as he sat in his new Peugeot 306, his mind was more on how the rain would affect the Rangers-Motherwell game the following night.

The car started like a dream – which would actually be a pretty lame dream if you were to have it – and he set out on the five minute drive to the shop. It wasn't too far, but there were several strategically placed traffic lights, specifically positioned to hold him up in the morning, and he wondered to whom he could complain at the council.

(It was, in fact, a strange coincidence, that the person to whom he should complain was the girl he'd met in the Montrose the previous Friday night. Unfortunate, then, that by the coming Friday when she would be waiting hopefully by the bar, Wullie Henderson would already be dead.)

By the time he pulled up outside the shop, the torrent of rain had eased, and he left his jacket in the car as he stepped out. There was a light on, which meant that one of the others had already arrived. Probably Barney. Chris would be late again. He was always late on Monday mornings, and Wullie knew he'd have to have a word with him. Some day.

He opened the door and walked in, the little bell ringing above his head, and Barney looked up from the Herald.

'Barney, how you doing?'

'Wullie. Not so bad, not so bad.'

'Good weekend?' asked Wullie, experiencing the sinking feeling that he always felt first thing on Monday.

'Aye, it was all right, I suppose. You?'

'Aye, aye, fine.' He looked around the drab surroundings of the small shop which had been his workplace for over ten years. Was any weekend which just led back to this place really fine?

'I got soaked when I came in,' said Barney. 'Bloody rain.'

'Aye, terrible,' said Wullie. He looked at Barney, knew he had nothing else to say. The same brief conversation every Monday morning, with seasonal variations, and then they would hardly talk to one another for the rest of the week. No point in telling Barney about the girl in the Montrose.

They stared blankly for a few seconds then, with a nod, Barney looked back at his paper and Wullie went about his business.

Chris Porter stirred, his head encased in a pillow. His girlfriend had been sacked from her job as Formula One driver by Tom Jones, the team owner, and he was in the middle of head-butting the Welshman, when he woke up. He smiled. That had been a belter of a dream. He would have to tell Helen later.

He rolled over, his eyes flickering open long enough to glance at the clock. Five past eight. It didn't register and he closed his eyes again, trying to slide back into the dream.

Shite. He opened his eyes, bolted upright. Shite. He'd slept through the alarm. The usual Monday morning event. Shite. He checked the clock again to make sure he wasn't rushing unnecessarily, then he leapt out of bed and into the bathroom.

It wasn't that he ever did anything particular on a Sunday night, he reflected, as he washed all the parts of his body that seemed appropriate, randomly spraying water over the floor as he did so. It was just a natural aversion to Monday mornings. He knew it was a good thing that it was Wullie who was in charge and not Barney, or he would've been in trouble a long time ago.

He dressed with unnecessary flourish and flew into the kitchen, debating whether to accept the fact that he was late and be even later by having cereal. Finding the fridge uncontaminated by milk, his mind was made up for him, and he sped to the front door and down the stairs with a sigh and an empty stomach.

He was still driving the same old Escort that his dad had bought for him in his last year at school and after spluttering a little in the rain, it kicked into action and he set out on the ten minute drive to the shop, wondering if this was going to be the morning when he finally got his backside kicked for being late.

He arrived at twenty-five past eight, found a heaven-sent parking space right outside, and ran in. Barney and Wullie looked at him from empty chairs. There were no customers yet. A little prayer was answered.

'What time d'you call this, Porter?' said Wullie.

Chris looked around the empty shop, slightly annoyed that he was out of breath after a ten yard run from his car. 'The time before any customers have arrived?'

Wullie raised an eyebrow. 'Aye, it's quiet now, but you should have seen the first twenty minutes of the day. Heaving, so it was. That not right, Barn?'

Barney shrugged, grunted, and went back to reading his paper.

~~'Won't happen again, Wullie,' said Chris, taking off his jacket and assuming his position.~~

'Aye, and you lot are going to win the cup this year.'

Chris smiled. 'Hey, we beat Morton three-nil on Saturday.'

'Yoo hoo!' said Wullie, raising his arms in celebration.

'Aye, you can laugh now, but you better hope you lot don't get us in the cup or you're in trouble.'

Wullie laughed again then stood up as the first customer of the day, his hair matted with rain, his face an atlas of misery, came through the door to the melodic tinkle of the bell.

'Aye, I'm shitting my pants, Chris. It's not as if you're going to get past Aberdeen in the quarter final, is it, Big Man?'

'You wait and see.'

Barney watched them from the corner of his eye. Football, football. It was all they ever talked about. It would be so beautiful one day to shut them up. What damage he could do with a pair of scissors. With a shake of the head, and further malicious reflections upon dark deeds, he returned to the gardening page.

Customers Must Have Hair

It was going badly. Exceptionally badly. There were voyages of the Titanic which had gone better than this. Barney caught the eye of the customer in the mirror, and did his best not to convey what he knew and what the victim had yet to realise. Sometimes the first haircut of the day can be catastrophic. A headlong rush to do good, which turns to bloody disaster. James IV at Flodden, the Charge of the Light Brigade, the Zulus at Rorke's Drift. It doesn't start out that way, but somewhere along the line it becomes a horror story. Grown men weep.

He surveyed his handiwork, realising the damage being cleaved by his own scissors. The man had asked for a straightforward short back and sides, a Frank Sinatra '62, but things had rollercoasted out of hand.

Ensuring he avoided his customer's gaze, he considered the two options open to barbers in such circumstances. One – keep cutting until all is recovered and the hair looks even. Unfortunately, this usually leaves the victim looking like a US Marine, and if it so happens that he thinks like a US Marine, you're in trouble. Two – cover his head in water, pretend your hair-dryer isn't working, and let the full devastation be revealed to him later on when he is sitting in work, his hair has dried, and his colleagues are having a field day. It's a lucky man who, under such circumstances, has a job which requires headwear.

The man who sat before him was of considerable stature. Seven feet tall, thought Barney. *Giant Kills Barber in Revenge Attack*. Option one was not viable. It must be number two, with the expectation that such a large man was unlikely to even ask for the hair-dryer in case anyone else in the shop might equate wanting your hair dried artificially with homosexuality.

Intricate and subtle are the politics of the barber shop.

He hesitated, but the decision was made. Imagining himself to be Clint Eastwood, he fixed a firm look in his eye and set about his work with as much conviction as he could muster.

Ten minutes later he breathed a sigh of relief as the slaughtered head retreated from the shop, the victim still unaware of the full horror which had been visited upon him, and curious as to why Barney had deposited a jug of water over his head. Barney made a mental note, to add to the list, to be certain to avoid the bloke in the street for the next few weeks.

He turned his attention to the bench. A man was waiting, but he recognised him as one of Wullie's regulars, so he nodded a slightly resentful acknowledgement and went about sweeping up the debris from the previous customer – noticing in the process that a disproportionate amount of it lay on the right hand side.

As he swept, he cast a wearied glance over his two colleagues, busy doing that barber thing of cutting hair and talking drivel at the same time. Chris was discussing the likelihood of truth in the rumour that Marilyn Monroe had had forty-three abortions; Wullie was grandstanding on the rights of man, as opposed to the rights of women, one of his common topics, to which Barney hated to listen. The words drifted across the short distance of the shop, and no matter how much he tried to switch off, the sound was always there, eating away at him. Like a cancer. Yes, that's it, he thought, a cancer.

'No, no, you see, I hate that,' Wullie said to a young lad. 'All this garbage about girls maturing faster than boys. It's bollocks.'

'You think so, Wullie?' said the boy, bright eyed, acne-blighted face, teeth yellowed by illicit teenage cigarettes.

Wullie smiled. There's nothing a barber likes more than some eager young sponge. 'Aye, of course it is. Think about it. The thing people equate most with maturity is sense of humour. One person

humour is another's schoolboy immaturity. Benny Hill, John Cleese, the Marx Brothers. For everyone that thinks they're funny, there's some eejit who thinks they're juvenile.'

'I hate Benny Hill,' said the boy.

Wullie nodded. 'Exactly. But he was the most famous British guy in America. You know,' he said, adding edge to the voice, 'that he ran for President against Ronald Reagan in 1980 and won nearly twenty percent of the vote?'

The lad looked impressed, nodding his head. Wullie continued before anyone could object, wisely deploying evasive scissor tactics to avoid cutting off the boy's ear.

'So that's the thing about comedy. What happens is that these young birds lose their sense of humour when they reach puberty, and boys don't, so they all think they're more mature than us. But they're not. They've just forgotten how to laugh, that's all.'

The lad's eyes had been opened. 'Jings, I never thought of it like that, Wullie.'

Wullie nodded, executing a neat manoeuvre around the left ear.

'Thing is, you can't really blame them, can you? I mean, if I'd had a pint of blood bucketing out of me once a month from the age of twelve, I'd have lost my sense of humour 'n all.'

The lad was impressed with Wullie's sensitivity for the female condition. 'Here, you're not one of these New Men, are you Wullie?' he asked, and Wullie smiled.

Barney rolled his eyes, shook his head and went back to his sweeping, an act in which he was deliberate and slow, as he was in everything he did. He had never had the knack of talking drivel to complete strangers. Certainly, he could talk about the weather with the best of them, or could cast an opinion on the repeated episode of Inspector Morse shown the night before – although the opinion usually belonged to someone else – but when it came to uncompromising asinine bollocks, he just didn't have it. He had been cutting hair for over twenty years, and yet, in this respect, he remained an amateur. Still, on this imagined Day of Days, he had something up his sleeve.

The door to the shop opened, accompanied by a gay tinkle from the bell. It was a Sad Man. Barney groaned. The 'few pathetic strands of hair' brigade. Men for whom hair is something which happens to other people. Men who grow a few strands of hair to a length of several metres, wrap it tenuously around their scalps, then wonder if people notice.

The Sad Man looked at the man in the queue, who gestured that he was waiting for Wullie, then walked towards Barney. Barney ushered him into the chair, ran a discreet and well-trained eye over his baldy napper, and wrapped him in the cape.

'What will it be then, Sir?'

'A short back and sides'll be just fine, Big Man.'

A short back and sides. What a joke. Barney looked at his hair, and dreamt of being able to cut it off at its roots. He lifted a pair of scissors, and they itched in his fingers. Twitch, twitch, twitch, eager to cut. Had to control the muscles in his fingers, the thoughts in his head. He sighed, put the scissors back on the worktop and lifted a comb. Might as well do as he was bid. As usual. One day he would have his revenge on all these bastards.

He combed the hair several different ways. He wasn't a fast worker, but he could have had this hair cut and the guy out of the shop in under a minute. But they never appreciated that, these Sad Men, he knew to spin it out for at least twenty. Make him think he had a decent head of hair on him. Dream maker, that's what he was. He felt like Steven Spielberg as he pondered the tools of his trade. Scissors, brushes, combs and razors, before deciding on an electric razor. Might as well pretend he had to shave the back of the neck and round the ears.

On a normal head of hair that would be good for at least five minutes per ear. He'd been told in barber school that he would resent ears at first, so much would they get in the way, but in time that resentment would pass and he would come to love and cherish the ears, like you did any other mo

straightforward part of the head. However, it had never happened for Barney. His resentment of ea went beyond rationality, and he knew he would never be cured of it. And, as always, even though there was little to be done with this Sad Man, Barney got himself into a tangle of arms and legs as he attempted to negotiate the elaborate folds of skin and cartilage.

However, ten minutes into the cut things were going smoothly. He was making it look as if he had much work to do, the Sad Man seemed happy, and there had been minimal conversation. Barney looked around the rest of the shop. Chris was reading the paper, Wullie had just finished telling his next customer of Florence Nightingale's outrageous lesbian tendencies.

Barney smiled. Now might just be the time to drop his bombshell, show the others he could compete on level ground. Show them that when it came to talking shite he was right up there with the two of them.

He had no interest in football. He hated it with something approaching passion, if so dour a man could feel passion for anything. Grown men as little boys. A war substitute. But even though he knew nothing of football, he had done something grand. That weekend he had looked at the league tables. He now had a little knowledge.

'Hey, any of you ever read these lonely hearts messages?' said Chris from the bench, the paper rustling in his hands.

Barney turned round quickly, nearly depriving the Sad Man of his right ear. God, would they ever shut up?

'Listen to this. *Single woman, late 30's. Interesting looks. Likes gardening, books and quiet nights. Seeks Marty Feldman lookalike.*' He laughed, was joined by Wullie and his customer. 'Interesting looks? Bloody hell, she must be a stankmonster if that's the best she can do.'

'Ugly bird, left on the shelf, more like,' said Wullie.

'And these guys are just as bad,' said Chris. '*Forty-six year old aesthete...* What's an aesthete again?'

'I think it's someone who changes his y-fronts twice a day,' said Wullie.

'They probably meant athlete. It'll be a printing error,' said Wullie's customer.

'Aye, right,' said Chris. '*Forty-six year old athlete seeks attractive woman in early twenties. Bloody hell, I bet he does. For long walks, gin and tonic as the sun goes down, Corelli's Concerto Grosso in G Minor, Wordsworth, and Renaissance architecture.*' He shook his head. 'What a flipping bampot.'

'What are you saying?' said Wullie. 'You don't like Corelli?'

'Not sure,' said Chris. 'Was he the Juventus centre-half the Rangers tried to sign?'

Chris laughed and returned to reading the paper. Barney simmered. He waited to see if Chris would say something else, thinking, 'just shut up for five seconds'. Got ready to talk his own bit of drivel. Opened his mouth, smiled.

'Listen to this one,' said Chris, laughing. '*Mature woman, mid-80s, looking for love. Skilled in Eastern lovemaking. Seeks man in 20s/30s for nights of passion. No cranks. Mid-80s! Can you believe it? Cheeky old midden.*'

'There's some strange folk out there,' said Wullie. 'Bet she gets loads of replies. Good luck to the gallus old cow.'

'Eastern lovemaking?' said Wullie's customer. 'You think that means she's shagged someone in the back of a motor in Edinburgh?'

The others laughed, Barney fumed, annoyed at himself for listening. Mid-80s. Incredible. He could've been his own mother, and he shivered at the thought.

Silence again. This time he would seize the moment.

'What d'you make of those Rangers, eh?' he said to the Sad Man, slightly louder than w

necessary, and he cast an eye over the rest of the shop to see the reaction he had elicited. Chris was laughing at the paper, and ignoring him; Wullie glanced over, but no more. Barney looked back to the customer.

Sad Man shrugged. 'What about them?' he said. 'Don't really follow it myself.'

He caught Barney's eye in the mirror and looked convincingly back. He was lying. He'd been a season ticket holder at Ibrox for over seventeen years, but he was aware of Barney's conversational deficiencies and there was no way he was talking to him about anything. Even the Rangers.

Barney had little reply, as he was already almost at the cusp of his knowledge; so he lurched into his usual silence. All that waiting for nothing. Feeling spurned, he hurried through the rest of the haircut, managing to stop himself cleaving off several feet of hair emanating from behind the right ear.

Five minutes later, the Sad Man handed over his cash, an extra fifty pence included, and walked out into the light drizzle of morning feeling like Robert Redford.

Barney watched him go, shaking his head with every step. If he ever got to run the shop he would have a sign put in the window. *Customers Must Have Hair*. He sneered and looked at the waiting area. The next customer up, he shuffled his razors and contemplated whether or not to mention the fact that he knew Rangers were five points clear at the top of the league.

The day dragged on, following its usual course. Barney only cut about half the amount of hair as the other two, partly because he was a lot slower, partly because few people sought him out in particular ahead of the others. It wasn't until late in the afternoon that he felt able to broach the subject of football again, and with an almost mathematical inevitability he was caught with his pants down.

It was a big bloke, a labourer from a site down by the Clyde. He was wearing a Scotland t-shirt, making Barney feel confident in starting a football conversation. Once again he bided his time, then chose his moment with a flourish, foot firmly in mouth, when all else in the shop was quiet.

'What d'you make of those Rangers, eh?' he said, not quite as cocksure as before, but still with a glint in the eye.

'What about them?' growled the Scotland strip.

Displaying the kind of blinkered enthusiasm which allowed Custer to stop for a KFC and a doughnut at the Little Big Horn, Barney failed to spot the warning signs.

'Five points clear at the top of the league. Some team, eh?'

The Scotland strip grunted. 'They're shite. Lost their last three games now. Pile of pish, so they are.'

Barney hesitated, but he bravely determined to battle on, like the German tanks in the Ardennes until he ran out of fuel.

'Aye, but you know, five points clear at the top of the league. Can't be bad, eh?'

'They're still shite. They're only five points clear at the top of the league because everyone else is even more shite than them.' He looked at Barney. This was a man who ate babies. 'What do you know about football anyway?' he growled.

Barney swallowed, scissors trembling in his hands. Unable to think of an answer, he quickly resumed some gentle snipping, a layer of tension now descended on his little area of the shop. For once he did not dither over a cut and, while ensuring that he did not make a hash of it, sent the Scotland strip packing as quickly as possible. He left with a grunt and all his change in his pocket.

As the door closed behind him, and Barney breathed a sigh of relief, Wullie laughed and spoke to him for the first time since twenty-five minutes past eight that morning.

'If you're going to tell someone how good the Rangers are, try not telling a Celtic fan next time, o Barney? We don't want a riot in here.'

He laughed again and was joined by everyone else in the shop. Barney, suitably embarrassed, retreated to the hiding place that was his natural reserve, and plotted his usual plans of revenge.

Bastards. They were all bastards.

He looked out the window at the massive figure retreating into the distance, and dreamt of him falling into a manhole, breaking his neck.

The rain thundered down with ever greater intensity. The skies were dark; occasional ferocious streaks of lightning rendered the clouds. The street lights were already on, fighting a losing battle against the gloom. Barney bent low over his brush, sweeping with slow deliberate strokes, and thought of dark deeds. Deeds to match the weather. Deeds which fate would force his hand to commit within the week.

The Lure Of The Flashing Blue Light

It rained all the way home. It always rained all the way home when Barney had to walk back from the shop. A phone call to the garage at four o'clock had produced the usual mutterings about a 'big job' and an estimated time of readiness of sometime the following morning – and so he had stepped out into the raging torrent without even making the effort to cover up. Head bowed, spirit broken, besieged by ill humour.

He lived in a top floor flat in a tenement at the university end of Partick, one of the old houses with huge rooms, and ceilings higher and more ornate than the Sistine Chapel. The kind of place which years ago had fostered a warm community spirit, but no longer in such times as these. Barney viewed all those around him with varying degrees of contempt and suspicion – his neighbours were no different.

He hung his soaking jacket on the hook behind the door and trudged wearily into the kitchen. Agnes was making an uninteresting dinner, with one eye glued to a prosaic Australian soap on the portable television. As Barney clumped in, Charlene was having a fight with Emma's sister's ex-boyfriend's girlfriend Sheila, who was pregnant by Adam's gay lover Chip.

'Good day at work, dear?' she asked, her eyes never leaving the television.

He grunted, took a glass from a cupboard, went to the fridge and poured himself some wine from a carton. Chilean Sauvignon Blanc, flinty with a hint of apple; good length; full breasted; serve with fish or chicken, or perfect as a light appetiser. He took a long and loud slurp and belched. Put the back of his hand to his mouth in some affectation of manners, then pointed at nothing in particular.

'You know what really pisses me off?' He looked at her expectantly, assuming her interest, although long years of indifference should have told him to expect otherwise.

'What, dear?' she said eventually.

'It pisses me off, all these bastards,' he waved his hand, "scuse the French, who come in there every day and insist on one of they two wee shitbags cutting their hair.' The voice rose a fraction in agitation. 'I mean, do these people, these bampots, actually think that Wullie or Chris is going to give them a better haircut than I am, eh? Eh?' He stabbed his finger in the air, unintentionally pronging a passing fly.

'Yes, dear,' she said. Troy had finally told Charlene that Cleopatra was pregnant by Julian.

'Exactly. I mean,' he continued, slight bubbles of froth beginning to appear at the side of his mouth, a string of spit suspended between top and bottom lip, 'how long have these two been cutting hair? Five, maybe six years. All right, maybe ten for Wullie. So what? Look at me. Twenty years I've been cutting hair,' he said, scything the air with his hand in time with each syllable, 'and I'm bloody good at it.'

'Yes, dear.'

'Bloody right. And look at those two muppets. They couldn't cut the hair off a...off a...' He searched the air for a suitable analogy, finding it as Charlene slapped Tony in the face and told him that there was no way that she and Beatrice could be half-sisters, '...they couldn't cut the hair off a druggo mammoth. No they couldn't. Bloody useless the pair of them. You know what they do?'

'Yes, dear?' She wasn't listening, but the tone of his voice had wormed its way into her subconscious, so she knew to sound inquisitive.

'I'll tell you. They just bloody talk about football all day. As if it's important. Who gives a shit about football? It's a lot of pish. Or that Wullie just stands there and comes out with all sorts of garbage. Did you know,' he began, attempting an impersonation of Wullie and missing by several

miles, 'that Cary bleeding Grant had an affair with Randolph Scott? Big bloody deal! As if anybody going to believe that shite. I mean,' he said, rising to his subject, while his voice descended Churchillian depths, 'I mean, look at all that's going on in the world. The country's going down the toilet. There's wars and strikes and death.' He clutched the breast of his shirt with his right hand. 'What's happening to the Health Service? Transport? Eh? What about that stuff? There's some blood-heid-the-ba' running about Glasgow slashing folk and cutting them up. What about that? What's the bloody polis doing about that? And what do they two talk about? Football!'

'Yes, dear.' Charlene was now convinced that Troy and Beatrice were having an affair and that Bethlehem wasn't her brother, while some savoury pancakes which Agnes had magicked from the freezer twenty minutes earlier, quietly burned on the stove.

Shaking his head and grumbling in a low voice, Barney polished off the glass of wine and began pouring himself another.

'Where's my dinner?'

'Programme'll be finished in a couple of minutes, dear.' Had Bill really lost his voice, or was he just doing it so that Charles wouldn't realise that Emma still loved Tom?

Barney grunted loudly and wandered off into the sitting room. He flicked on the television, found the snooker on BBC2 and within five minutes was sound asleep.

The rain struck relentlessly against the window of the dingy little office. Detective Chief Inspector Robert Holdall stared gloomily at the water cascading from the gutters outside and wondered what other disasters could befall him. As he had occasion to do most days, he tried to remember what it was that had made him want to be a policeman in the first place. Action, adventure, glamour, women. Obviously it'd been none of that, so what had it been? A vague desire to fight the forces of evil. Something like that. He'd had the thought in the past that it was because of the sixties Batman TV series, and had spent a lot of time since persuading himself that it wasn't that at all. That would be just too sad. Thwack! Biff! Blam! Love your tights...

The lure of the flashing blue light, that was all. Just the lure of the flashing blue light. He could be driving an ambulance.

There was a knock at his door and a young constable walked into his office. Not long removed from school, the dregs of adolescent acne still clinging wildly to his face, barnacles to a boat. He closed the door behind him and stood before Holdall, nervously awaiting the invitation to talk.

'Constable?'

'Sir. The results from the lab are negative, sir.'

Bugger.

Why are you thinking *bugger*, Holdall? Of course the results are negative. You're not dealing with an amateur here. You're dealing with some seasoned killer who knows what he's doing. And who's intent on mocking you every step of the way.

'All right, Montgomery.' He wondered as he said it if this really was Constable Montgomery. 'Will you ask MacPherson to come in here, please?'

The constable nodded and disappeared back through the door, leaving a trace of Clearasil in the air. Holdall leant back in his chair, put his hands behind his head, his feet up on the desk. Where do they stand?

Five murders. No corpses, just body parts mailed through the post to the victims' families. Never anything from the package to help them trace the killer. Always postmarked from a different town in Scotland; always a note sent to the police at the same time, each one more laden with derision than the

one before. When he caught the guy, which he was sure he'd do, before going through the formalities of making the arrest, he was going to kick his head in.

The door opened and Detective Sergeant MacPherson walked into the room. He was a big man who had in his day played full-back for West of Scotland, but after being sent off for the eleventh time had decided to save his brutality for the job.

Holdall watched him as he entered the room. He liked him, enjoyed the Barbarian pleasure working with him. It made him feel safer, if nothing else. And for all his brawn and thuggery, he was a good man. Intelligent with it.

'Take a seat, Sergeant. Won't keep you long. I presume you'll be wanting to get home.'

MacPherson shrugged his giant shoulders. 'There's some football I wouldn't mind watching. It's not that important.'

'That English Premier league stuff?'

'Aye.'

'Don't know how you can be bothered with it. Seems like a load of shite to me.'

He looked away from MacPherson, took his feet off the desk and swivelled round, so that he was side on to the other man. MacPherson knew what was coming, sat and waited patiently for it. Another examination of the facts. Another run through the salient information. Another drive down the road to nowhere. They were in exactly the same place they had been since the first murder, and all there was for them to do was talk. However, he understood Holdall's need to do it.

'Roberts tell you about the lab report?' said MacPherson.

Roberts! Bugger. That was it. Who was Montgomery? Felt a slight redness in his face as he remembered. WPC Eileen Montgomery.

'Aye, aye he did,' said Holdall, shaking his head. He put his hands down, clasping them on his stomach. Felt like he should be giving some leadership to the investigation, but the tank was empty. He had no ideas.

'Where does it leave us, Sergeant? Where are we at?'

MacPherson considered.

'We're in a pile of shite,' he said.

Holdall smiled. That was just about right.

MacPherson continued his recap of events.

'We're nowhere. We've got some eejit running around Glasgow committing indiscriminate murder then visiting other parts of Scotland to send back a slice of body. No connection between the victims other than that they've all been men. Don't know if there's any significance to that. Certainly doesn't appear to be a gay thing, and hard to imagine a woman doing all this stuff. But you never know, can't rule it out. Not these days. Anyway, nothing to link the places the body parts have been getting sent back from...'

'Which have been?'

'Pitlochry, Edinburgh, Kingussie, Largs and Aberdeen. We've checked out hotel guest lists in those places for the nights that the packages were posted, but there hasn't been anyone who stayed in more than one of them. We've spoken to everyone from Glasgow who stayed overnight in these towns on the relevant dates, but they all had their reason for being there, and there was nothing suspicious. There've been a few people that we can't trace, and it could be that he left false names and addresses, but that could also mean nothing. There's no reason why someone couldn't have got the train to any one of those places and back again in the same day.'

Holdall nodded, then grunted.

'That's about it, isn't it, Stuart? Everywhere he goes is on a main rail route, so we can maybe assume that he's been taking the train. So that narrows it down.'

'Sir?'

~~'All we have to do is arrest everyone in Glasgow who doesn't have a car.'~~

MacPherson smiled. The idea appealed. Too bad it wasn't practical.

'Anything else, Sergeant?'

MacPherson marshalled his thoughts, then continued in his low voice.

'There's no connection with the body parts that he's sending back. So far we've had an ear, a right hand, a right hand and left foot together, a left leg, and then on Friday we had a head.'

Holdall shook his head, still unable to comprehend the awfulness of the crime. Killing someone, beheading them, and then mailing the head back to the family, when they'd probably still been under the impression that the bloke had run away to Blackpool for a few days. Couldn't think about it too closely. You couldn't do that on this job and stay sane.

'This is a sick bastard we're dealing with, Sergeant, a sick bastard.'

MacPherson nodded, continued talking.

'So far we've no idea what he's doing with the remainder of the bodies. Certainly, if he's got rid of them, we don't know where.' He paused, thinking for a second or two. 'I don't think there's anything else, sir.'

Holdall shook his head, staring wearily at the floor.

'No, Sergeant, you're right. There isn't. We've got some sick bastard carving up the citizens of Glasgow, they're expecting us to do something about it, and we haven't the faintest idea what that is.'

For a fleeting second MacPherson felt pity for him. He knew he took his cases personally. But that was all part of the job, and Holdall had been doing it long enough to accept the weight of expectation.

Holdall turned round in his chair, placed his hands decisively on the desk, looked MacPherson firmly in the eye.

'There's nothing else for it, Sergeant. Take the list off the system of everyone in Glasgow who owns a car, and then arrest everyone else.'

MacPherson raised his eyebrows, until the look on Holdall's face told him he was joking. Of course he was. If they did that they would have to arrest too many councillors currently off the road on drink driving charges. The stink would be unbelievable.

They smiled and, with a wave of the hand, Holdall dismissed the Sergeant from his office.

'Have a good evening, Sergeant. Who's playing?'

MacPherson thought about it then shrugged. 'Who cares? Football is as football does, eh, sir?' He turned and walked from the office.

Holdall nodded. 'You can't say fairer than that,' he said to the empty room. He looked out at the Gothic darkness of early evening, the rain now hammering against the window. Allowed his chin to slump into the palm of his hand. 'Fuck,' he said softly, before rising slowly from the chair.

Death Row

Barney looked on proudly as his finest haircut of the month walked from the shop. The lad had wanted his hair cut by Chris, but there had been too many people in the queue ahead of him, forcing him to settle on Barney. And he had shown him what real barbery was all about. The haircut had been a peach. A non-technical short back and sides job, low difficulty certainly, but executed with beautiful panache nonetheless. Even and neat on the top, tapered to geometric perfection around the ears and the back of the neck. Barbery at its finest, he thought to himself, from one of the best exponents of the art in the west of Scotland.

He glanced at the other two to see if they'd noticed, but Chris was too busy discussing the on-going plight of Partick Thistle, while Wullie was contemplating the exact nature of the relationship between Laurence Olivier and Danny Kaye. Barney shrugged. If they were too busy discussing trivialities to notice real genius, then that was their problem.

He turned and surveyed the shop, feeling good about himself. A warm glow. Like the pilot who lands the plane in a storm without a bump, or the teacher who discovers the one pupil in a thousand who understands triple differentiation, the barber who carries out the perfect haircut has reason to be proud.

It was a small shop. A row of four chairs along one side next to the great bank of mirrors, and a long cushioned bench along the other, upon which the customers awaited their fate. Wullie worked the chair nearest the window, Chris next to him, then there lay an empty chair, occasionally filled on busy Saturdays by a young girl moonlighting from an expensive hairdressers in Kelvinside. At the back of the shop, working the fourth chair, was Barney, and he resented it. Behind him was a small alcove making the room into a slight L-shape, where there was a fifth seat, a seat which hadn't been worked since the great hair rush of the late seventies, when every man in Britain had wanted a perm, so that they could look as much of an idiot as everyone else. It was some surprise to Barney that he had not been relegated all the way back there.

There'd been a time when he'd had possession of the coveted window seat – for some fifteen years in fact – but he'd been ousted late one Friday afternoon in a bloodless coup. Wullie had been after the chair for some time and, using the fact that his father owned the shop to his advantage, he'd executed a manoeuvre that had relegated Barney to the back of the room. It'd been the talk of the shop for some time – the talk of hushed voices – but gradually the affair had quietened down, as Wullie had known it would, and they'd settled back into a steady routine.

However, it had widened the gap between Barney and the other two men. They shared no interests whatsoever and consequently no conversation. And they also shared very few customers, most of them preferring to go to the younger men. Barney was left with a few old boys whose hair he had been cutting for years, a few men who didn't care, and the odd stray first-timers who didn't know any better.

He looked over the queue of ten people crammed onto the seat and realised there were none who fitted any of the required categories. They would all be waiting for one of the other two bastards. However, he still had the post-dream-haircut glow about him. Surely at least one of them would have surveyed the majesty of the hair on the bloke who had just left. Surely brilliance such as that would not go unnoticed.

He looked at the row of men, each with their private thoughts about the ordeal awaiting them. mini-Death Row. Some sat with anticipatory relish, some were nervous, some were angry, present only on the instructions of their wives. Or mothers.

'Who's next?' said Barney, with the confident air of a fighter who takes on all comers.

Like a row of disciples denying all knowledge of Jesus under the scrutiny of an awkward centurion, most of the ten stared blankly ahead, ignoring him as best they could. The two or three nearest him felt obliged to shake their heads, although only one of them could do it while looking him in the eye. Barney gave them an incredulous stare, but since they were all ignoring him, it was wasted. A change in strategy was required.

It is frequently effective for the unemployed barber to remorselessly select individuals who may well crack under the pressure of personal attention. Another useful lesson from Barber School, which Barney had never forgotten.

'You, my good man,' he said pointing to the chap at the head of the queue, 'come on.'

He had chosen unwisely, however, for this was not a man to be browbeaten. He looked Barney in the eye, unconcerned about such things as direct appeals.

'It's all right mate, I'm going to wait for Chris, thanks.'

Bloodied, but not yet beaten, Barney nodded. 'Fair enough.' He pointed to the next in line. 'You then, my man, on you come.'

The man shuffled his feet and stared at the floor, remembering the words of his wife as he'd left the house; 'Here you, mind and no' let that old bastard at your hair, 'cause you know what he did the last time, and if you come home and you've no' got your hair cut, I'll be like that, so I will, I'll be like that, get back out there. See if you spend that money down the boozier, I'll be like that. I will.' Finally he shook his head.

Barney rolled his eyes, gritted his teeth, looked like he was going to punch someone. Did his best to remember the lessons he'd learned from years past, and kept his cool. Perseverance, that was what was needed. Someone would eventually crack. He just had to make sure it wasn't him.

He gestured to the next chap, who noiselessly gestured towards Chris. Barney gritted his teeth again. He wasn't coping with this at all well. One more. He'd try one more.

'Here you, what about you?' he said to the next in line, his temper beginning to spill over.

The man ignored the tone of voice. 'No thanks mate, I'm just going to wait for Wullie, if that's all right.'

The final straw, settling gently on the camel's back. Forgetting everything he'd learned at Barber School, Barney cracked.

'No, it bloody well isn't all right.' He stared angrily up and down the row of embarrassed faces. 'Not one of you, eh? Not one of you is willing to get your hair cut by me? Am I that bad?'

He pointed towards the closed door. 'Did you not see that haircut I just did. Bloody stoatir, so it was. And you're all going to wait for these two,' he said, sneering. 'It's three-thirty now. If you all wait for them, some of you aren't going to get your haircut at all. I've just pulled off one of the finest haircuts this shop's seen in months, and yet you all just sit there like bloody sheep.' He stared them up and down. 'Well?'

He was aware of the beating of his heart, the redness in his face. Began to feel a bit of an idiot, but something drove him on. Searching for the one who looked the most sheepish, the most likely to crack under pressure.

'You!' he said, pointing. The chap turned reluctantly to look at him. 'Aye, you, young man. How about you? I'll do you a nice Gregory Peck, something like that.'

It was a lad of about seventeen and, with pleasure, Barney realised that he was about to give in. He would have his chance to show the rest of these bastards what a decent haircut looked like.

'Look Barney, if they all want to wait for Chris or me, then that's fine. You can't have a go at the customers. Someone else will come in shortly'

Slowly, Barney turned and looked over at the window. Wullie stood wagging a pair of scissors in Barney's direction. Barney stared back. His heart beat a little faster.

The bastard. The total bastard. That he should have humiliated Barney in front of all the customers.

He stood with his feet spread. An aggressive stance, ready for a fight. Wullie was having none of it. He murmured something to his customer and took a few paces towards Barney. He spoke in a quiet voice, but it was a small enough shop that there was no way that anyone could miss what was said. At the last second, and with a fine sense of diplomacy, Chris turned on his hair-dryer to create some background noise.

'Look Barney, don't think that I'm embarrassing you in front of the customers. You're embarrassing yourself. And them. If they don't want to come to you, it's no bother. Just leave them to it. Gregory Peck, for fuck's sake.'

Barney grumbled something about not leaving them to it, without having the guts to really say it.

'I'll talk to you about it later, Barney, if that's all right with you.'

Barney stared at Wullie, the anger boiling up inside him, but contained for all that. He nodded a bitter nod, sat down in his chair, roughly lifted the paper, and made no attempt to read it.

The moment had passed, but tension still hung thick in the air. Barney looked at his paper for a few seconds, then turned the corner down and glanced menacingly over at the row of men sitting there trying to ignore him.

It was the first time he'd felt so humiliated since the window seat debacle, and while he would eventually let that one pass, there was no way he was going to let Wullie talk to him like that in front of all these bloody goons.

Chris silenced his hair-dryer – much to the relief of the man at the other end of the warm blast – then the only sound in the shop was the quiet snip of two pairs of scissors going about their business. Finally the man at the whim of Wullie's hand asked him if he'd read the gossip about some film star to whom Barney had never even heard, and slowly the shop returned to normal. The quiet hum of pointless chatter, interspersed with electric razors and the gentle flop of hair to the floor.

Then, with the elegant timing of a Victorian watch, the door to the shop swung open. Ten pairs of eyes looked expectantly. The possibility that here might be someone to assuage their guilt. It was a man in his late twenties, unaware of the cauldron into which he had just walked. Quietly closed the door, took his place at the end of the queue.

Barney laid down the paper, stood up, brushed down the seat, lifted the cape, looked the man in the eye. He didn't immediately recognise him. A good sign.

'All right then, my good man. All these others are waiting, so you're next in line.'

Unaware of the expectations weighted upon his shoulders, the man did not even hesitate.

'That's OK, mate, I'm just going to wait for Wullie.'

Barney stood, cape in hand, a bullfighter without a bull. He stayed calm. Bit his tongue, although the sight of Wullie staring at him out of the corner of his eye did nought but increase the desire to explode. He placed the cape back over the chair, deliberately lifted the paper, and once again sat down. Just before his backside hit the seat, he paused, looking once more at the customer.

'Are you sure now, my friend, there's a long queue?'

The man nodded. 'Aye, I'm all right, mate, thanks. There's no rush.'

'Very well.'

Barney slumped into the seat, seething quietly within. He hated all these bloody customers. Why did they think they were anyway? Complete bastards the lot of them. But no matter how much he hated them, it did not tie the shoelaces of how much he hated Wullie and Chris. Those smug bastard bastards. He would have his revenge.

He didn't know how, but somehow he would. He was sure of it. He looked along the shop at Wullie, and then past him out of the window. It was a dark day, the rain falling in a steady drizzle, and

it had done all afternoon. Doleful figures passed by, hunched against the wind and rain, unaware of the injustices within the shop past which they scuttled. But some day they would find out. Some day everyone would know about what went on in the shop. Some day soon.

Robert Holdall slumped into his seat with the enthusiasm of one settling into the electric chair. Another press conference. The Chief Superintendent was forcing them on him almost daily. He would have liked to have argued that they were stopping him from doing his job, but he had so little to go on that the only thing that they were getting in the way of was his afternoon tea and sandwich.

He was accompanied as usual by the burly press officer, a woman of quite considerable stature who exercised an amount of control over the press that no man had ever managed. And as Holdall readied himself to read his prepared statement, she silenced the packed room with a couple of dramatic waves of her right arm. This was a woman who ate large mechanical farm implements for breakfast.

Holdall stared gloomily at the words written down in front of him. God it was short. Of course it was. They had nothing to say to these people. What could he tell them? That they were thinking of arresting everyone in Glasgow who didn't own a car? Of course not. And so he had written down three sentences of total vacuity. A nothing statement, forced on him by a bloody-minded boss. He would have liked to have seen him sit there and read out this garbage.

He finished staring at it, looked up at the collected press. Aw shite, he thought, there are even more than usual. Maybe a few up from England. He made the decision quickly and without any prior consideration. To Hell with it, he thought, give them something a bit more solid than this piece of vacuous mince.

He cleared his throat and, pretending to read from the paper in front of him, began in his low, serious press-voice.

'Ladies and gentlemen. I shall be necessarily brief today, which I am sure you will understand when you hear what I have to say.' He paused briefly. Shit. What was he going to say exactly? Clearing his throat again, took a drink from the glass of water at his right hand, then jumped into the blazing inferno, eyes open. 'Late last night, officers from this station came into possession of a valuable piece of evidence, the exact nature of which I am not yet at liberty to divulge. It has given us a very definite direction of inquiry which we are now pursuing with all possible vigour.' Not bad, he thought. Optimistic, but vague. Don't blow it. 'Given the nature of this new information, we are hopeful of a major development in this investigation, some time in the next forty-eight to seventy-two hours. Christ, what are you saying? You idiot. Shut up, and don't say any more. 'I am afraid that I am unable to disclose any more information at this time, but you can be assured that when these anticipated further developments have taken place, you will be notified in the usual manner.'

He closed his mouth, blinked, looked up. A brief second and the room had erupted in a cacophony of noise. He sat looking like a stuffed fish, while Sgt Mahoney did her best to calm the crowd. Eventually, after some time and with much difficulty, the room had returned to rest, and the Sergeant pointed a yellowed finger to a man with his arm raised, near the front of the crowd.

'Bill Glasson, Evening Post,' he said, a look of surprise upon his face. It was the first time he had been called at a press conference in fourteen years, and he had no idea what question to ask. He knew they were not going to get anything more out of the guy, but they were obliged to shout at him. It was their job. When the tumult erupted he had been asking what the inspector had had for breakfast that morning, just so he could add to the clamour. A new question was needed, however.

'So,' he said, thinking frantically, 'you say you have some idea who the killer is. Do you know

exactly who the killer is?'

~~Holdall shook his head. What a crap question, he thought. He could have sworn that before, the bloke had been asking him something about breakfast.~~

'I'm sorry, but I'm not at liberty to discuss any information other than that which I have just given to you.'

When it became obvious that he wasn't going to say any more on the matter, the clamor immediately started up again, and after a minute or two, was quietened down. Enough of this, thought Holdall. What's the point? If I go on with this, I'll just end up saying something even more stupid than I already have done.

He muttered quietly to the sergeant that he would only take one more question, and when she announced this to the crowd, there was an even more extravagant commotion and frantic waving of hands. She selected the most innocent looking one, a young blonde haired woman sitting in the center of the room.

'Greta Burridge, the Mail.' Greta Burridge swallowed. Third day on the job. She had her question to ask, however. 'So, Chief Inspector Holdall, does this mean that the rumours that you intend to arrest everyone in Glasgow who doesn't own a car are unfounded?'

Holdall sat at his desk, his head firmly buried in his hands. He still hadn't come to terms with what an idiot he'd been. Looked at his watch. Another forty minutes, and then he would have a meeting with the Chief Superintendent. He was going to have to explain himself. As always, he couldn't help thinking of the time he'd been dragged to the Headmaster's office when he was fourteen, after exploding a small bomb in the music teacher's sandwich box.

And he hadn't had an explanation for that either.

- [download Il Libro del Tofu - 90 squisite ricette per mangiare con gusto e vivere sani e snelli pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [read *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*](#)
- [read Harry Potter och Den Flammande Balgaren \(Harry Potter, Book 4\)](#)
- [click Is the Bitch Dead, Or What? \(The Ritz Harper Chronicles, Book 2\) pdf](#)
- [**click **Interconnecting Cisco Network Devices, Part 2 \(ICND2\): \(CCNA Exam 640-802 and ICND exam 640-816\) \(3rd Edition\)****](#)
- [Final Cuts: The Last Films of 50 Great Directors for free](#)

- <http://www.celebritychat.in/?ebooks/Il-Libro-del-Tofu---90-squisite-ricette-per-mangiare-con-gusto-e-vivere-sani-e-snelli.pdf>
- <http://korplast.gr/lib/Design-Sketching.pdf>
- <http://test.markblaustein.com/library/A-Shrinking-Society--Post-Demographic-Transition-in-Japan--SpringerBriefs-in-Population-Studies-.pdf>
- <http://flog.co.id/library/A-Visual-Dictionary-of-Architecture.pdf>
- <http://damianfoster.com/books/Backpacker-Magazine-s-Complete-Guide-to-Outdoor-Gear-Maintenance-and-Repair--Step-by-Step-Techniques-to-Maximize->
- <http://wind-in-herleshausen.de/?freebooks/Absalom--Absalom-.pdf>